



Canine Bulletin

August 2000

Nebraska Task Force - 1



A Real Trainer

Submitted by Monica Barger

A Real Trainer strives to see each dog as an individual

A Real Trainer strives to see each owner as an individual

A Real Trainer strives to keep in mind that dogs rarely say "I won't"—they usually say, "I can't"

A Real Trainer understands that disobedience is most often confusion

A Real Trainer seeks knowledge

A Real Trainer understands that the failure of the dog is a failure of the method/human and seeks a better path

A Real Trainer knows that there is more to be learned than time on earth allows

Someday I may humbly become a Real Trainer. Until that day, I just keep trying and the dogs keep forgiving and trying to teach me!

- By Terry Wright

The Bark Barrel....Friend or Foe?

Submitted by Monica Barger as a favor for Zima!

We've all seen it...our victim is safely hidden away in the middle of that big rubble pile somewhere, toy in hand, instructions finalized and we confidently release our K9 partner to "save" them. As our canine moves across the rubble, we begin to see small signs of trouble and as the scenario unfolds, we find ourselves wishing that we could take it all back and start over, or at least wishing that the rest of the team wasn't here witnessing this disastrous search problem we've just set up. After we do our best to recover and develop some quick "patchwork" to save the problem, here comes a teammate with some advice for us on how to help solve the issues we've all just witnessed and you just know it's going to be that darn barrel again! We find ourselves in an aversive reaction, "similar to that of our dogs", we think, when we should be listening to the "barrel lecture" once again...Our heads are turned away, ears back if they could be, tail down if it could be, We're staring off in the distance uttering "um hmmm, yep, um hmmm" during the lulls in conversation where we think it might be appropriate and make it appear that we are actually listening.



This is all too common a scenario for canine handlers when it comes to barrel work with our dogs. I have been guilty of it and am working to change my attitude about it. I had a bad attitude about it because my dog did, or was it the other way around? One has to wonder! I've been thinking about this phenomenon in disaster canine handlers...how it appears that the barrel has become a sort of "punishment" for some handlers and I can see why it might appear that way. If things don't go quite right on a more advanced search problem, we are often told to move back to the barrel. When it is connected to a negative experience such as a screwed up search problem, as human nature dictates, we view it as punishment and moving back down the ladder in training.

The truth of the matter is, the barrel is a necessary constant in disaster dog training. As we learn about scent and the many, many variables a disaster dog must learn and adapt to in their work, we begin to realize how difficult it can be to set up a successful search training scenario for our dogs. Dogs learn best when they are successful and rewarded for a job well done and in order for them to be successful we must find some way of

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New SAR Puppy Conto

Submitted by Monica Barger

Just though I'd share my only decent phot of our newest family member Conto. He's a nine week old GSD from European/German lines (the breeder



that Garrett recommended to me when he was here giving his "drive" seminar to our SAR group). He is a dream pup with tons of drive and a great little attitude! He's already barking for me and we are working on developing his prey drive for great tug games when he's a bit older. He has plenty of teeth and lots of grip already..."OUCH" seems to be his most coveted reward right now. He's a dark sable, just like his dad. Thanks to Garrett and Heidi for your direction and help in finding a good GSD and to Rick Burgos of Burgos kennels for letting me pick one of his "already sold" puppies.


Obedience & Your USAR Dog

Submitted by Dian Quist Sulek

I went to an obedience seminar last weekend and received many compliments on the way my dog, Tommy, worked. I appreciated the compliments and I guess I should feel good about my abilities...when actually I feel like I need to work harder. I guess what I know is that training a dog is a never ending learning process, and you can't get caught up in what you have done, but instead keep thinking about what you can do next!

How can you improve yourself? How can you improve your dog? In this task of finding live, buried, human scent there is no room for error. Our quest for improvement is never ending... in reading our dogs, in know how to care for our dogs, in training our dogs...in knowing our own limitations, and of course our dogs limitations. How do we react under stress? How does our dog react under stress? How can we test for these situations?

I don't know what all the answers to these questions are. I do know that I will continue to search for answers and situations...continue to communicate with others, help others, learn from other people and other dogs.



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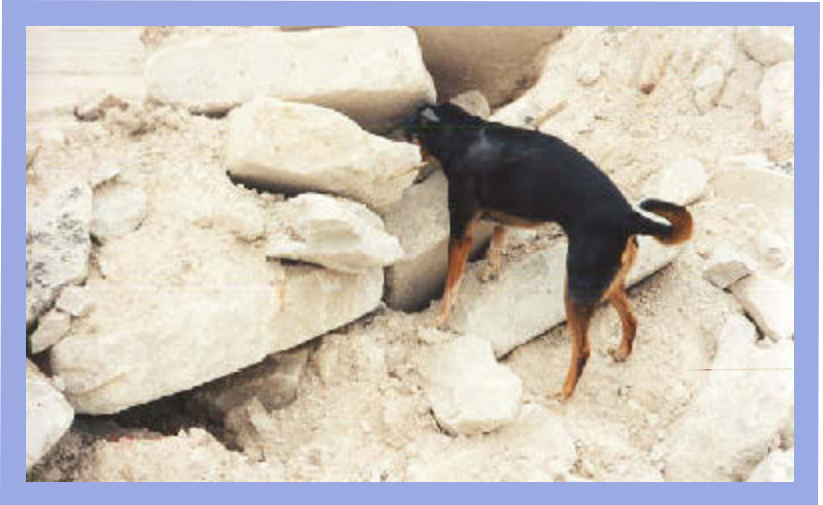
The Disaster Dog and Cadaver Training

Submitted by Elaine Sawtell

Cadaver is something we will face at every disaster. It is another area in which a well-trained dog can be the best tool.

While it is true a search dog without specific cadaver training is usually easily encouraged to indicate dead, it seems only reasonable that a dog with specific cadaver training will be much more effective. The site of a disaster with all its distracting scents is not the time to start cadaver training.

The possible presence of dead and live in close proximity points out the advantage of teaching different alerts for each. We must always keep in mind, though, that a tired dog working alongside a stressed handler in a real situation is likely not going to give the alert we see in training.



A lot is known about decomposition, but a lot is guesswork. For instance, in a disaster we will be dealing with the recently deceased. Some will die during search operations. Exactly when “dead” scent will replace “live” will vary with environmental factors.

NE-TF1’s K9 Guide Training Progress allows for beginning cadaver training when the dog has attained deployable status. Since our dogs have been imprinted with live finds first (including those with wilderness backgrounds), it is assumed they will bypass dead to alert on live. However, this is something that should be proofed in more advanced training.

Getting Started

As with any training, THINK about what you want to teach and how you want to teach it before you start. Have a plan. You should know your dog well by this time. Use a method that works best for him. If you’re not seeing the results you want, modify it. But THINK about what you’re doing.

1. Reward System. As with any SAR training, the dog works best for what motivates him best.

2. Choosing your alerts. What the dog does naturally is often best and certainly easiest to build upon. However, consider the advantage of a passive alert (sit or down), particularly with a dog who is strong penetrator. If you expect him to bark for live and he would rather penetrate anyway, you may be blurring the distinction between your alerts even more and inadvertently encouraging penetration instead of barking on live.

3. Handling material. For sanitary reasons and, more particularly, to assure what we’re teaching our dogs to look for, specimens should always be handled with rubber gloves or tongs. In addition to avoiding putting your scent on the training aid, avoid repetitive use of scent tubes, toys or towels that have your dog’s saliva on them.

What to use? The real stuff is best. Pseudoscents are available and useful. Some people use pig parts. However, the general consensus of experienced cadaver people in this country is that there IS a difference.

Use a variety of containers: glass jars, plastic jars and bags, coffee cans, scent tubes. In later training, put out blank containers that have never been used for cadaver. Don’t be surprised if your dog hits on that familiar container.

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minimizing our variables and giving our canine partners every advantage for a successful find and alert. How can we do that? How can we control the location and pinpointing of scent? We can't do it in the rubble.... or can we? How can we control whether our dog can actually get a visual on a victim or not in order to train them to alert on a scent source that is not visible? How can we teach our dogs to penetrate into a victim? How do we control the movement of the scent on the air currents? How can we control distraction training, making sure that we, as handlers have a clear distinction of human scent and a competing distracting scent so we know when to correct our dogs? All of these can be controlled and made most successful by using a barrel and preferably on the ground. The only scenario that a rubble pile adds to a search problem is one of agility and one of affecting the scent in various ways, which becomes a more complex and thus, a more advanced search problem. It is to our advantage as handlers to use the barrel to train the desired behaviors in a search canine, to use the barrel to proof the behaviors and make sure they are solid before progressing in our bark alert training. In this manner the barrel becomes a very, very necessary and integral part of disaster dog training...one which we will revisit often, at all levels of training, if we hope to have a finished and talented search dog.

The barrel should be an easy and fun training experience for our dogs. Many dogs have a problem at the barrel, which leads to a bad attitude from the handler, but when we review the training process of these dogs that have problems at the barrel, most often we see some point of training that went awry and the dogs learned what we, as helpers, unintentionally taught them. Be alert for problems at the barrel and fix them there before moving on...lay a good, solid, strong foundation at the barrel. As you progress to more advanced levels of search work, if you see any problems starting to develop, use the barrel to control your variables and fix them. Use the barrel in the rubble pile as a transition for your dog as you progress towards more advanced problems in the rubble. Don't be in a hurry to start advanced rubble searches...your dog is learning to use his nose and to tell you when he's found someone, that is the exciting part of this training and it should be exciting to you, as the handler, no matter where it takes place. Know the uses for the barrel and how it can aid your training and don't be afraid to

use it. If your dog has problems at the barrel, chances are good that these problems will be ten fold when more variables are added as happens in a rubble search. Move slowly in your bark alert progression, train and proof your dog at the barrel before moving on.

Learn to make the barrel an exciting and motivating training prop for yourself as well as your dog. As you take your dog to the barrel practice getting in the frame of mind that you might have on a real search scenario, get yourself psyched up for the search and let your dog feel that excitement. From your dog's point of view, the barrel is easy and should be exciting...an easy pinpointing of the scent source, easy access to the victim when the proper behavior is displayed (barking) and their favorite toy or food right there in front of them once they're in. How difficult can that be?

So next time a teammate or canine handler approaches you and mentions the barrel to fix some search problem, listen and take notes. Chances are they are giving you a very important key to your dogs' success as a disaster dog!

***Training Logs Submission:***

*Mail or Drop off Logs to:
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4. Introducing your dog to cadaver. Before you begin imprinting and training, see what your dog's natural reaction is to cadaver. With your dog on a loose leash and under no command, walk him downwind of a specimen he can investigate but can't get to. When he shows awareness of the scent, encourage him to investigate. Reactions may range from instantaneous strong interest to curiosity to avoidance. Assuming a positive reaction, use your command word. Complete avoidance by a dog is rare, but if present, must be overcome before imprinting starts.

Imprinting

There are many methods of imprinting in cadaver training. You can begin with scented tennis balls or towels tossed into the grass to find and retrieve. However, remember the "saliva" and "your scent" factor here. In this method, you will progress to separating the toy from the scent and rewarding with the toy when the dog indicates the scent. The reward must come very quickly and at the source or the dog may learn to look to you instead of focusing on the scent.

Another method is to put the scent container in one of a row of cinder blocks. Take your dog down the row on a leash, use your command word, and praise and encourage his interest in the correct block. Give your rewards as close as possible to the source. (This applies to all stages of cadaver training.) You can later rearrange the blocks to create a different picture for your dog, but always use the same block for the cadaver to prevent confusion because of residual scent.

Imprinting is where you lay that all-important foundation. And what's the most important factor in foundation? **TIMING!** In the beginning, our dog must be rewarded instantly and rewarded well for giving the behavior you're looking for. Whether you use a toy or food or clicker in addition to your verbal praise, give it as quick as possible as close as possible to the source.

While most cadaver searching is done off lead, it is a good idea to do your initial training on a flex-lead. For one thing, you may need to search on lead in some situations (along a highway or in an otherwise hazardous area), and your dog should be able to work on lead.



On lead, you can control where the dog ranges without continual commands. You are also able to slow his pace and teach him to work more methodically. A dog that runs full bore can miss things, waste energy and will tire quicker.

On or off lead, be careful not to guide the dog with body language. Let him work the area and lead you to the scent.

Extend the time between placing the source and doing your search from a few minutes to days. Wind and environmental conditions will cause the scent to drift and pool. Your dog must learn to handle these variables, and you must learn to read

his body language as he works them out.

As with all SAR training, expose your dog to as many scenarios as possible. Include buried and overhead finds.

Any search environment will have distractions; but as part of your training, you will want to include food, clothes, animal scents. When distractions are put out by the same person placing the cadaver, always place the distraction first to avoid any residual scent from handling the cadaver first.

A detailed cadaver training log is essential to help you chart your progress. You may be asked to produce one in court if working with law enforcement.

Cadaver training is an excellent way to build your dog's search stamina. Done right, it requires concentration and work ethic on your dog's part. Depending on weather conditions and the terrain, work your dog for short spans of time, building up to 20 minutes or so. Have him rest for a few minutes, then continue to search. He will be more effective and efficient than if he searches to the point of exhaustion.

